

IN THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (New) An automatic analyzer comprising:

means for moving down a pipetting probe to immerse said pipetting probe into liquid in a first container;

means for pipetting liquid from said first container to a second container by said pipetting probe;

means for measuring the content of said second container;

electrostatic capacitance measuring means for measuring electrostatic capacitance between said pipetting probe and said liquid in said first container; and

control means for controlling operation of said pipetting probe,

wherein said control means once stops said pipetting probe after moving down said pipetting probe to a position previously set, measures a standard electrostatic capacitance between said pipetting probe and said liquid in said first container relating to said position previously set, detects a surface position of said liquid by comparing said electrostatic capacitance obtained while said pipetting probe is moved down with said standard electrostatic capacitance,

and adjusts a distance which said pipetting probe immerses into said liquid in said first container.

8. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 7, wherein

said electrostatic capacitance between said pipetting probe and said liquid in said first container is started to be measured after said control means once stops said pipetting probe.

9. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 7, comprising:

a detecting means for detecting a height of said first container,

wherein said position previously set is set based on said height of said first container.

10. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 7, wherein

said detecting means for detecting a height of said first container judges a kind thereof and shows said height corresponding to said kind previously stored based on said kind detected.

11. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claims 1 to 4, wherein

said pipetting probe moves down to said preset position more quickly than said pipetting probe moves down after temporarily stopping.

12. (New) A method for detecting a surface position of liquid of an automatic analyzer comprising, means for moving down a pipetting probe to immerse into said liquid in a first container, means for pipetting liquid from said first container to a second container by said pipetting probe, means for measuring the content of said second container, and electrostatic capacitance measuring means for measuring electrostatic capacitance between said pipetting probe and said liquid in said first container, said method for detecting said surface position comprising the steps of:

stopping said pipetting probe once after moving down said pipetting probe to a position previously set,

measuring a standard electrostatic capacitance between said pipetting probe and said liquid in said first container relating to said position previously set, and

detecting a surface position of said liquid by comparing said electrostatic capacitance obtained while said pipetting probe is moved down with said standard electrostatic capacitance.